STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

PROSPECTS FOR A GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL SECURITY STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines and evaluates the past efforts of Gulf Cooperation Council through historical records to identify key weaknesses hampering efforts to improve security throughout the Arabian Gulf region. By examining past efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council an attempt is made to highlight their successes and shortcomings. Toward that end, security linkages between regional powers are evaluated to draw certain conclusions. The record clearly indicates that past collective security arrangements failed largely because of their exclusionary features. To remedy such shortcomings, this paper recommend following an aggressive policy of Gulf Cooperation Council countries developing a "Gulfanization" of regional security.

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

Gulf Region/States - Refers to the countries of the Arabian Peninsula and those countries contiguous to the Gulf. Included are: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Formed by the six Gulf states of the Arabian Peninsula (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE) in 1981 with the aim of coordination, integration, and cooperation among member states in all fields. This cooperation evolved into regional military cooperation to protect GCC states from the dangers posed by the Iran-Iraq War.

The Gulf - Most often referred to as the Persian Gulf or Arabian Gulf. To avoid confusion, it will be referred to as the Arabian Gulf in this paper.

Gulf War - Commonly referred to as the Persian Gulf War of 1991, Desert Shield/Storm, and War in Southwest Asia. Here it will be referred to solely as the Gulf War.

Dual Containment - Present US policy of simultaneously containing Iran and Iraq by economic and political means and/or threat of force as a means of ensuring regional security.

Vital Interest - An issue so important to a nation's well being that the leadership refuses to compromise beyond a point that it considers tolerable. Beyond that point the country's leaders are willing to risk economic and military sanctions.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a collective security system for the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states was first conceived in the 1980s but stumbled over differences of sovereignty and technicalities.

The Gulf War, launched six years ago by Western powers, showed the military weakness of the GCC states despite their wealth from oil and spending on arms. The Gulf Arab states, helpless when Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait, are finally making some progress toward building an integrated defense system. The Gulf states are largely themselves responsible for the security in the Gulf. The member countries need to cooperate together more intensively than they are now doing in the GCC. The GCC has to take on more responsibilities and authority to develop itself into a kind of organization like NATO. Only through tight cooperation on political and military affairs can they withstand the pressure of Iraq or Iran. Through the cooperation in the GCC the task of the international community can be restricted to supporting the GCC member states in the organization, technology, military hardware and software, industrial development and of course during crises. The international community doesn't have to get directly involved in securing the stability of the Gulf but only to support it.

This paper examines and evaluates the past efforts of Gulf Cooperation Council through historical records to identify key weaknesses which hampered efforts to improve security throughout the Arabian Gulf region. By examining regional historical, cultural, and political events an attempt is made to highlight their successes and shortcomings. Toward that end, security linkages between regional powers are evaluated to draw certain conclusions. The record clearly indicates that past collective security arrangements failed largely because of their exclusionary features.

BACKGROUND

Emergence of the Post-World War I Arabian Gulf States

The geopolitical problems, border disputes, tribal rivalries, uneven economic growth, and lack of social and political reforms within the Arabian Gulf nations are largely the result of developments in Southwest Asia since World War I. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the war and the discovery of oil in the Gulf region created the conditions not only for internal chaos but also for external competition among the world's most powerful nations for control of those immense oil resources. Late twentieth-century developments in the area are the direct result of that big power rivalry and its effect on the political development of the states involved. With the defeat of the Central Powers during World War I, the Ottoman Empire quickly disintegrated. While the US watched, the European members of the victorious allied coalition, France and the UK, reshaped the pieces into spheres of influence, drew boundaries, and set up client states. The years immediately after the war saw the emergence of new Middle Eastern kingdoms and protectorates. At least twelve of the new political entities that emerged on the Arabian Peninsula after World War I faced problems regarding acceptance of their new borders by native inhabitants as well as neighbors. The War had changed things, underlining the importance of oil for the continued power and prosperity of the industrial world. As early as 1914 the government of Great Britain, quicker than other industrial powers to see the potential importance of oil, had already become majority owner of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which controlled major oil fields in Persia. Postwar competition for oil, which pitted France against Britain and later drew in the United States, would go beyond mere commercial rivalries.[1] At stake was the future of the West.

The effort to reconstruct the Arabian Gulf region represented the beginnings of a global power struggle to secure the oil resources of the Middle East. In May 1933 Standard Oil and Saudi Arabia signed a concession agreement for exploiting local petroleum deposits. In the next year, the Kuwait Oil Company, a joint company formed by Gulf Oil Corporation of the United States and the British Petroleum Company of Great Britain, made a similar deal with the emir of Kuwait. The first big strikes in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia came in 1938. The interdependence of the industrialized world with the oil economies of the Arabian Gulf was just beginning.

World War II and the Arabian Gulf Region

World War II sped up the process by which the former parts of the Ottoman Empire became nation-states. After that war, and especially after the loss of India in 1947, Great Britain's priorities in the Gulf changed. It found the region no longer necessary as a military frontier to protect its Indian interests but hoped to maintain a presence in the region because of its growing economic involvement in the oil fields. In much of the Arabian Gulf the change to nationhood was preceded by a period of more explicit Western control. In Iraq during 1941, Britain put down a wartime attempt to sever its control and depose the monarchy. British occupation of Iraq for the duration of the war followed. The United States too became directly involved in the Gulf as part of its effort to send supplies to the Soviet Union for the war against Germany. When the United States Army occupied much of Iran and set up the Persian Gulf command in 1942, ignorance of the region was widespread among Americans, policy makers as well as the public.

The War Department had no maps of Persia when the decision was made to move into the country, and the State Department's Division of Near-Eastern Affairs had a staff of thirteen, only three of whom spoke some regional language. Initially there seemed little reason for concern.

At the time, the United States produced over 60 percent of the world's oil, and the Gulf region, including Iran, Iraq, and Arabian Peninsula, pumped only 5 percent. Wartime demands for oil began the long-term shift of the industry's center of gravity from the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean to the Middle East, and Americans were quick to adjust. The 1950s was a revolutionary decade in the Middle East. The United States emerged as the dominant Western influence in the region, particularly in the oil industry.[2] In 1958 Egypt and Syria formed the short-lived United Arab Republic, a brief experiment in Pan-Arabism. The revolutionary tide reached Iraq in the same year. A bloody military uprising overthrew King Hussein of Jordan relatives and revoked the alliance with Britain. A 1957 conference of Arab oil experts broached the possibility of an organization of oil exporting states.[3] Three years later, in September 1960, those states created the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at a meeting in Baghdad, marking the start of a new period of growing assertiveness among oil producers in the Middle East. By the 1960s the political order established by Britain in the Middle East had fallen apart.[4] "The British had created an imposing institutional facade but had not put down many deep roots. Perhaps their most lasting legacy was an accelerated drive for modernization, financed by the revenues from the oil industry that they had helped nurture." In 1969, already long preoccupied with its economic problems, Britain announced its intent to withdraw its remaining forces from the Middle East. Two years later, the last British troops left Aden at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, leaving the region devoid of the sometimes unwelcome stabilizing power

that Great Britain had provided.[5] As Britain declined as a regional force in the Middle East, the United States became more influential.

World War II had raised American awareness of the region's strategic importance, while the growing involvement of American oil companies had made the region more important to American security and prosperity. American economic interests in Middle Eastern oil remained largely in private hands. The need for direct government involvement did not become clear until profound changes took place in the oil industry, including the final wave of nationalizations that followed the dramatic 1973 price increases. The United States needed assurance of regular supplies and sought to channel the huge oil profits into areas that enhanced the American fiscal stability and prosperity.[6] After Britain withdrew from the region, the United States adopted a "Twin Pillars" policy, encouraging the development of regional power centers in Saudi Arabia and Iran, which would be relied on to maintain stability and protect American interests. The new American policy also served another purpose-to block Soviet influence in the region.[7]

The United States and The Gulf Defense

With the emergence of the United States as a bulwark against Soviet influence, the governments of the Gulf Nations began to turn toward the United States. The success of a small American military training mission late in World War II helped encourage what ultimately became a long-term connection between the armed forces of these nations. The training mission focused on several Saudi bases and remained an important part of postwar American assistance to the Gulf Nations. In 1950 President Harry S. Truman explicitly assured King Abdul Aziz of American support for the preservation of Saudi independence and territorial integrity. Closer ties benefited both countries. The United States gained access to and use of the Dhahran airfield, and in

exchange, the United States provided arms and training for the small Saudi army and helped develop the naval and air services.

Early in the 1970s the Saudis, with one eye on the power vacuum created by the British withdrawal from the Gulf, asked for a special American military mission to study projects related to national security and make recommendations for future assistance. In response, the United States conducted several studies of Saudi defense requirements and began the sale of modern fighter aircraft to the Royal Saudi Air Force. Other large Gulf military sales programs followed, as did modernization and training programs, their costs surging along with Gulf oil profits.[8]

PROSPECTS FOR A GCC SECURITY STRUCTURE

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 shattered not only peace in Kuwait but also any notion of a unified collective security structure in the Arab world.[9] Never in the history of the Arab League had one member attempted the annexation of another; the League failed miserably in making a reality of the notion of Arab brotherly unity. After the Iraqi invasion, twelve of the twenty-one Arab League[10] members lined up behind Kuwait, while the others rose to support Iraq's position against intervention. As members of the Arab league majority, the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council debated their next actions. To ensure their security, the GCC states declined to rely on Iraq assurances of nonaggression or on mediation efforts from an already factious and aligned Arab League, instead, the GCC states used the Arab league vote as a cover of legitimacy for the introduction of foreign troops to deter further Iraq military actions.

The split in the Arab League caused by Iraq's invasion and the open Saudi embrace of massive numbers of western troops marked a watershed in the intra-Arab relations. The belief of a single, relatively unified Arab world was laid to rest at least for the foreseeable future. In

retaliation for Yemen's support of Iraq, for example, Saudi Arabia expelled its sizable Yemeni population. Other states in the Gulf encouraged or in some cases forced their own Palestinian populations to emigrate to Jordan as punishment for Jordanian and PLO support of Iraq. Arab nationalism and brotherhood seemed to have been buried. Meanwhile, the GCC's inability to deal with the Iraqi military threat was painfully evident. Remnants of Kuwait's military forces, which regrouped in Saudi Arabia, had at their disposal a mixed bag of technology: American A-4 Skyhawk and French Mirage F-1 combat aircraft, British Chieftain and Yugoslav battle tanks, and Soviet Kalashnikov rifles. Kuwait's American Navy-supplied A-4s needed different spare parts and technicians than Saudi Arabia's American Air Force-supplied F-15s. Coordination among the states on air force basing facilities and command structure was patched together only after invasion. In short, the situation was a mess. After the end of the Gulf War, the Gulf states took a serious look at their future defense needs in the face of a resurgent Iran and an Iraq that still looks upon the Gulf with hungry eyes.[11] Iran's expulsion of Arab residents from Abu Musa, an Iranian-occupied island claimed by UAE, and its decision to purchase at least three submarines are specific threats to and tests of the GCC's security environment. Iranian success in intimidating the GCC would render the alliance incapable of presenting a credible deterrent force.

For Kuwait's security, the GCC's collective response has not gone far enough. Thus far, fulfillment of the GCC's security needs has rested primarily on pre-positioning agreements and understandings of common defense with the United States, Britain, and France. In addition, the inadequately armed troops of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) who patrol the border are unable to end border incursions or even to interdict and engage individual infiltrators.

In response, Kuwait, which has taken the bold step of signing open defense cooperation agreements with the west[12], is building an electric fence on its Iraq border to serve as both a deterrent to infiltrators and also as a physical boundary line where none existed before. The fence and its accompanying anti-tank ditches and berms would only be effective if coupled with greater GCC military cooperation. Otherwise, the GCC cannot base its security structure on such limited means as a fence nor on such nonbinding bilateral understandings with the West.

In order to become something more than a weak reed for Kuwaiti security, the GCC must attack the problem on two fronts. First, GCC states must form a closer union to deter future aggression. The phrase, "an attack on one is an attack on all", must be credible to make potential enemies think twice about aggression. With greater unity, the GCC states must coordinate a single set of foreign policy objectives based on the twin pillars of cooperation with the west, especially the United States, the GCC states cannot play one superpower off against another anymore. Today, only one superpower remains to help guard against an aggressive Iran or Iraq. Second, while the GCC does not own the military assets to defend against an Iraqi or Iranian land push from the north, it must be able to bear the brunt of the fighting with American support. In extreme cases, a GCC with a unified military defense structure must be able to hold off an aggressive land push by an enemy long enough for outside aid to arrive. To do this, the GCC states must extend their political cooperation into the defense realm and still maintain their individual sovereignty. Infrastructure maintenance, sustainability of forces, interoperability of equipment, and standardized training must be instituted. Fortunately, the GCC states have already taken steps towards this goal, but these measures have been half-hearted in view of the threats they face.

Whether any country can rely on the GCC for its security depends upon the GCC's ability to enact the necessary policy prescription outlined above.

Weakness as a Source of Instability

"In view of their desire to effect coordination, integration, and cooperation among them in all fields....(and) in order to strengthen their cooperation and reinforce their common links," six states in the Gulf chartered the Gulf Cooperation Council on May 25, 1981. Formed to counter potential Iranian or Iraq hegemony, the GCC stressed political and economic integration instead of military union to preserve its members' freedom. However, by 1983, the GCC states, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, began a series of annual military exercises to enforce a greater degree of military cooperation and preparedness. The formation of the Peninsula Shield Forces, a rapid deployment force theoretically capable of responding to internal and external GCC threats, was a welcome step. However, the idea never gained much favor with all the GCC member states. Furthermore, the GCC states do not enjoy the manpower capabilities that may provide them with a viable defense force structure.

On paper, the military manpower of Saudi Arabia appears large (73,500 men). In reality, the Saudi Armed Forces are divided into different grouping with the National Guard[13] effectively under Crown Prince Abdallah's command, while the remaining armed forces fall under the command of Defense Minister Prince Sultan and King Fahad. This split in overall commands, common in the rest of the GCC, is more political than military. For example, Prince Abdullah maintains his power separately from the "Sudairi Seven" by his control of the National Guard. In addition, the Saudi system prevents a strong, unified army from posing an internal security

threat in case of popular disaffection with the government.

Similarly, the Armed Forces of the UAE appear strong. However, they too, are divided into separate, often rival commands. Each head of a UAE emirate desires autonomy from the others. As a result, the UAE fighting force suffers from divided leadership and internal squabbles.

The differences within the UAE are repeated in the entire GCC. The smaller states, for example, are anxious about Saudi domination. Saudi Arabia, in turn, prefers to preserve its culture from interference by Kuwait's National Assembly and to remain the "big Sister" of the GCC to legitimize its growing international clout. Still, many rivalries linger among the states. The stickiest of these disputes is the Qatari-Bahrain conflict over the Hawar Islands, including Fasht Al-Dibal, which is physically nothing more than a small sand bar submerged at high tide. The intense dispute over ownership of these islands has verged on armed conflict a few times in the last decade. Unable to reach a compromise in the GCC, Bahrain and Qatar have taken their dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague.

A second source of conflict within the GCC, and one that has flared up recently, is one of border disputes. Qatar has been wary of Saudi Arabia since the latter appeared to back Bahrain's claim to the Hawar. The Qatari-Saudi dispute escalated in October 1992, into a brief period of border skirmishes. This time, however, the GCC, led by a Kuwaiti mediation effort, successfully cooled the tensions. Nevertheless, the potential remains to undermine greater GCC cohesion. Saudi Arabia's differences with its neighbors include a disagreement with Kuwait over two tiny, uninhabited islands off the shore of the Neutral Zone between the two countries. Although the zone was divided in the 1970s equally between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia with the two agreeing to share its oil profits, the islands are part of its territory, and are not included in the

partition. Saudi Arabia, though, claims the islands for itself.

In 1977, Saudi troops temporarily occupied the islands before the Iraqi invasion. Interestingly, when coalition troops freed Qaro from Iraqi occupation in February 1991, Saudi Arabia tacitly acknowledged Kuwaiti ownership of the island in one of its war communiques by stating that the first piece of Kuwait has been liberated.

A third source of weakness for the GCC is the members states' differing individual threat perceptions.[14] Kuwait, for example, faces an immediate threat from Iraq. While no other GCC state faces an enemy with claims of sovereignty over it as sweeping as those of Iraq over Kuwait, Iran, until the 1970s, claimed sovereignty over Bahrain, but it never tried to invade the state. When Bahrain moved into the Saudi orbit in the early 1980s, Iran relaxed its claims. The states on the southern end of the Gulf, the UAE and Oman, do not face the same immediate Iraqi threats as do Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Instead, they are historically more concerned with defining their relationship with Iran. However, since Iraq's threats regarding oil pricing policy to the UAE in July 1990, this country has taken the Iraqi threat more seriously.[15]

Instability Caused by Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait

The leaders of the GCC awoke on August 2, 1990 with a broken dream of regional security based on diplomacy and deterrence. The Peninsula Shield they had formed to be called in to a hostile situation was still sitting at its base of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia, despite Kuwait's pre-invasion request that it be deployed to Kuwait. The veto, or at best delay, of the Shield's deployment, which would have pulled the other GCC states in war immediately upon its attack, freed Iraq's hands to face only Kuwaiti troops, and not those of countries with which Saddam Hussein had signed nonaggression pacts.

Kuwait's problems followed the Kuwaiti government to Saudi Arabia. Because of its small size, Kuwait had only two air bases, one to the north of Kuwait City and one to its south. Iraqi troops overran these bases on the first day of the invasion, leading Kuwaiti combat aircraft to relocate in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Because of this lack of strategic depth and coordination with its allies, Kuwait faced the task of rebuilding a battered Army and Air Force while the country's infrastructure and vital military, economic and civilian targets were open to easy attack.

Moreover, a closing of ranks in the GCC behind Kuwait's position may have been improbable without significant American political and military backing. The GCC land force that was finally formed to move up to the eastern flank of the coalition forces through the Saudi border town of Khafji received mixed reviews. The GCC force quietly submitted to Saudi command, but the force was small and served more of a political than a military function. GCC troops were allowed to enter Kuwait city as liberators while the American Marine units, arriving ahead, stayed at the outskirts of the city. Qatari troops in particular, however, received praise for their efforts with Saudi land forces and American air power in recapturing Khafji when Iraqi troops briefly occupied that Saudi town in the opening stages of the war. Still, the GCC Air Forces, especially those of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, proved more effective. A Saudi pilot was first among the coalition forces to destroy two Iraqi aircraft, albeit with American support. In all, GCC aircraft flew over 6,000 combat sorties during the war. Fortunately, Saudi Arabia was ready for the large deployment of coalition aircraft on its soil. The massive, modern Saudi air bases everywhere from Khamis Mushayt to Dhahran were built with the assistance of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

In fact, "No US or NATO base has sheltering or hardening equal to the Saudi bases at Dhahran and Khamis Mushayt." GCC Air Forces then, are not the main obstacle to an effective security structure for the GCC and Kuwait in particular. The resurgence of Iran, a future Iraq, and the reunification of a hostile Yemen pose serious threats to the GCC. Iran's recent rearmament program, estimated at two billion dollars a year and including at lease three Soviet-supplied submarines -- a new weapon in the Gulf -- should cause concern in the GCC. Recently, Iran's reported interest in procuring nuclear technologies has raised tensions with both the GCC and the West. However, this fear, as with the Abu Musa affair between Iran and the UAE, has played into GCC hands by reinforcing the belief that the GCC is the West's only reliable ally in the Gulf. The Islamic Republic, meanwhile, has demonstrated that it cannot be relied upon as a flexible regime. Furthermore, United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991), which limits Iraq's capability to restock weapons of mass destruction, does not limit Iraqi imports of conventional weapons once the UN sanctions are lifted.[16]

Finally, reunification of the two Yemens consolidates Yemen's power and poses a threat to Saudi Arabia. After all, the Yemenis covet Saudi Arabia's Asir province, are bitter towards Saudi expulsions of Yemeni workers there and remember South Yemen's conflict with Saudi Arabia in the 1960s. These threats will all test an American president's resolve to protect America's allies and its vital interests. Such a reliance by the GCC states on the whims and personal characteristics of an American president to respond to threats could be fatal if that president does not exhibit the necessary political will to come to the GCC's defense.

Prospects for Political Cooperation

The first and most important political action the GCC states must take to begin forming a security structure is to appear to be a solidly united community. An attack on one must directly become an attack on all. To achieve this, the states must finally address their border issues.

The Bahraini and Qatari decisions to abide by a forthcoming ruling of the ICJ are encouraging in this regard. While other problems may remain unresolved, the states of the GCC have demonstrated that they may lay aside their differences to combat a common enemy.

The Arabic proverb of "my brother and I against my cousin; my cousin and I against the stranger" should hold in case intro-GCC tensions continue. After all, the GCC states -- especially Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia -- share a closer heritage with each other than with states like Morocco, Syria, Egypt or even Iraq. A successful policy of closing ranks will then deprive a foreign power of a chance to play upon intra-GCC rivalries.

Kuwait's role in the process is simply described. It has the most to gain from a strong GCC commitment to Kuwait's defense. Already, Kuwait has successfully won the commitment, expressed in strong terms at the December 1993 GCC summits in Riyadh. The fostering of a GCC with added diplomatic and military clout, however, has not been as successful. Second, the separation of the GCC from the rest of the Arab world's politics should allow the Gulf States to pursue a foreign policy that benefits themselves first. Specifically, the states of the western coast of the Gulf are no longer bound by the Arab rhetoric that forces them against Israel. When the GCC most needed the support of the Palestinians, the PLO deserted it. On the other hand, the United States, which was viewed primarily as a pro-Israel country, rose to the GCC's defense.

With most Palestinian communities in the GCC states now returned to Jordan and the West Bank, the GCC and Kuwait in particular, which lost most of its 400,000 Palestinians, is no longer bound by the desires of a large foreign constituency. The GCC need no longer exhibit the solid defense of the PLO that it once had. Instead, it should continue to practice its new attitude of allowing the Palestinians to make their own peace with Israel without the previously staunch GCC support of the PLO. Such a strategy renders the case for a strict enforcement of the Arab Boycott of businesses with ties to Israel no longer valid. If this policy is pursued, the United States may look upon the GCC as a loser ally. In the same vein, opposition to any request by the GCC should diminish.

Third, the GCC should continue its cautious rapprochement with Iran, while, at the same time, solidly uniting against any Iranian bullying attempt. The strong statements by the GCC regarding the Abu Musa dispute show a council united in its stand for joint action and driven by the example of solidarity during Desert Storm. Abu Musa thus represents a test of wills for the GCC. If Iran wins in retaining the island, let alone annexing it, the GCC will have already lost the first round in its security campaign. If, however, the GCC, aided by the United States, continues its staunch stand, it should make Iran more wary of further adventures.

Fourth, the GCC must solidify its already hard line against Iraq. While the rhetoric from the General Secretariat in Riyadh is tough, Oman's diplomacy, for example, casts a doubt upon the plausibility of these words. Throughout the Kuwait conflict, Oman had maintained diplomatic relations with Iraq, and at one point late in the conflict, Iraq's foreign minister was allowed an official visit to Oman. Also, Oman has preserved its contacts with Jordan despite the rest of the GCC's break with King Hussein. Even more alarming is the new "creative" diplomacy of Qatar.

As a state which had difficult relations with the United States, even during Desert Storm, Qatar has taken open steps towards a resumption of relations with Iraq. In late December 1993, Qatar's deputy army Chief of Staff broke the diplomatic boycott of Iraq by visiting the country.

While his government did not support the visit, it failed to condemn it. In addition, Qatar has broken ranks with the GCC in offering to host an international round of Arab-Israeli peace talks in Doha. While Qatar may continue to be solidly behind the GCC in a crisis situation, the GCC needs much more coordination to avert such a crisis. The actions by Oman and Qatar render doubtful the warning that an attack on one GCC state necessarily implies an attack on all six. The present good cop, bad cop approach may only encourage an adversary who sees the council divided against a dangerous enemy.

Fifth, to maintain contacts with the rest of the Arab world, especially with Jordan and other states that stood against the GCC joint actions in Desert Storm, the Council should use Egypt as a mediator. This policy is beneficial in paying Egypt back as an ally by reaffirming its growing international clout as home of the Arab League and it holds Egypt at arms length should a change in Egyptian leadership or circumstances produce a reversal in policy as evidenced in GCC fears of the Damascus Declaration. Signed in March, 1991, the Damascus Declaration, or the "6+2" agreement, provided for an all Arab defense of the Gulf, where Syria and Egypt assume responsibility with the six states of the GCC. However, this agreement was stillborn because of GCC unease about the reliability of Egyptian and Syrian troops.

Prospects for Military Cooperation

Forward defense must provide the GCC with a five day window of secure mobilization sites--military bases and port facilities for a deployment of American and other western forces.

To do this, the GCC states must first provide for joint weapons acquisitions policies such that the weapons become interoperable. Second, the states must institute joint command, control, communications, and intelligence networks, with a view toward a unified defense network, probably with a Saudi-led military staff.[17] Third, the GCC military staff must have a coordinated policy with the United States for the introduction of American troops in a crisis situation, much along the lines of the Kuwaiti-American host-nation support agreement of September 1991. Fourth, a joint GCC ground force must complement the air defense network to hold the land through a GCC-wide program of standardization of equipment, service, doctrine and training.

Fifth, the Gulf states must ensure that the United States remain diplomatically active in the Gulf. To do this, the United States must become a plausible political deterrent to aggression.

The United States, it must be remembered, is now friendly in the Gulf only with the GCC states. Therefore, to preserve its vital oil and strategic interests, it must continue to exhibit the bipartisan concern for the Gulf freedom exemplified in the Carter Doctrine and the Reagan Corollary. An outside attack on a GCC country that enjoys close military ties with the United States will undoubtedly draw the United States into the conflict. While a continued and visible American presence is politically and culturally destabilizing to the Gulf region, the strategy presented above calls for an American presence that is neither over the horizon nor in the cities, but just on the horizon.

The American commitment should include visible training exercises like Operation Eager Mace which, conducted in August 1992, included American Marines and Kuwaiti troops with the participation of Saudi and UAE personnel. The lesson from the Kuwaiti reflagging operation (Earnest Will) shows that once the United States was physically introduced to the conflict, it took

the two extraordinary steps of working with the Soviet Union to approve United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, which set a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq War, forcing Iran's compliance to end that war.

Moreover, except for the special case of Lebanon, the United States military has never abandoned a country in which it had agreements unless asked to do so by the host government. The present ten-year renewable agreement of pre-positioning between Kuwait and the United States is a wise decision on the part of each side, and it should be extended to include the entire Gulf.[18] Sixth, Egypt and Syria should be formally included in the security structure, but on a shorter time limit than the United States, and mainly as a token force. Syrian and Egyptian contributions should be held to a three-to-four-year renewable agreement based upon the conditions and politics within each of the parties and the GCC states. The token forces, however, underscore the importance of a contribution by the GCC's wartime allies to its peace-time defense. This contribution will especially reinforce Egypt's position as the prime mediator between other Arabs and the GCC countries. Furthermore, both Syria and Egypt would be generously rewarded for their deployments. However, this participation is different than the Damascus Declaration because, here, Egypt and Syria would not anchor the defensive force.

The principle reason, of course, for modest forces from these two countries is to minimize any Egyptian or Syrian interference with internal GCC question. A change in leadership in either of these two countries may present serious risks to GCC security if the new leader can order a sizable presence in a GCC country to turn against the local government.

UNITING THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY TRACKS

If the GCC succeeds in forging a stronger unity based upon its own needs for survival, it might present a credible deterrent. However, if this unity is coupled with an equally strong political and military partnership with the United States where pre-positioning evolves into military cooperation, the GCC will undoubtedly present a credible deterrent and realistic defense against a potential aggressor. Pursing a policy of practical partnership with the United States, the GCC will present itself as the principle power in the Gulf.

It will therefore stand alongside Israel in American public opinion as a reliable ally of the United States. Because Israel is of little strategic use to the United States in the Gulf region, the GCC must occupy the position as a stabilizing force in the Gulf. The risks of such a policy pale in comparison to the benefits of a reassured, defended GCC.

Political Destabilizers

The first and greatest objection GCC countries may have towards the proposed security structure, according to GCC officials and private citizens, is that member countries' sovereignty may be compromised.

However, the Western European Union Defense Treaty, which is similar to the proposed structure for the GCC, also calls upon the member countries to coordinate their responses to an attack on any one member. The smaller Western European states such as Belgium have preserved their individual sovereignties throughout the life of the treaty even while they have come closer together politically and militarily.[19] A second objection rests upon the belief that with dependence on Saudi Arabia, member countries may be vulnerable to Saudi intimidation concerning its governing structure, for example, Kuwait in this regard must walk a political tight rope in

appeasing the United States with a continued democratization process, while also refraining from angering the more conservative Saudi government.[20] To satisfy its neighbors, Kuwait should use the United States' pressure as an excuse to Saudi Arabia for allowing the National Assembly the freedom it has and it should make clear to the Saudis that it is trying to hold the line on the spread of American inspired democracy. Conversely, Kuwait can play Saudi Arabia off against the United States by using Saudi influence to ease American pressure.

A third reservation against instituting the proposed policy is a fear of internal instability caused by a United States presence. The argument rests upon the belief that the visibility of American Forces in Saudi Arabia, for example, will cause unrest in the kingdom that might spread to neighboring member countries. The policy discussed modifies this argument by shunning a large, permanent American presence. Instead, American troops need not walk through the streets of Riyadh or Jeddah; under the agreement they would perform their exercises while respecting regional sensitivities and then pull out.[21] Interaction with local civilians need not be frequent, as Saudi Arabia has demonstrated in keeping American GIs away from Saudi cities during Desert Shield. Kuwait, on the other hand, actually welcomes some interaction of servicemen with locals.

A fourth objection is centered on the notion that a strong, efficient military reserve system may act as a destabilizer in a military structure. The theory holds that greater Shi'i participation in the reserves (participation based on actual representation of the society) poses a security threat. In Kuwait this argument may be moot, because the Shi'a of Kuwait exhibited outright patriotism during the Iraqi invasion. Tales of Kuwait Shi'a working harder in the Kuwaiti Resistance to prove their loyalty are popular; other Gulf Shi'i populations remained loyal to their own nationalities.

The fifth objection to the proposed agenda concerns the future of Iraq. A post-Saddam Iraq, alienated by GCC security plans, may become belligerent. This case may not be possible as a destabilizer because the GCC states, having created a renewed Arab Alliance, would not succumb to the same entanglement of Arab promises as those given by Saddam before his invasion of Kuwait. Successive Iraqi regimes in this century have heralded different promises, but they all agreed on their desire to acquire Kuwait. Therefore, the GCC states would be wise to cooperate with a post-Saddam Iraq should it renounce this goal, but they should nevertheless be cautious in accepting a change in policy as valid.

Military Destabilizers

Chief among the objections of the proposed program is that GCC military cooperation with the United States would spark a regional arms race. An arms race, however, has already begun; Iran's massive military spending efforts are a main cause of the GCC's proposed response. The GCC countries cannot survive the status quo; they must face Iran. They must risk an arms race, for such a race does not pose a major threat to a GCC with tight security arrangement with the United States. Iran has learned wisely from Iraq's mistakes in its Kuwait venture.

A second objection from the military viewpoint is premised on the GCC's inability to achieve full self-defense of its own. This view, in effect, questions the reliability of the United States to defend the Gulf at any time. Granted, those who hold this view are correct in assuming the impossibility of GCC self-defense, but the proposed strategy calls for a defense orientation like that of Switzerland, where the GCC buys time, preferably up to five days, until outside help arrives.[22]

The individual political and military cooperation efforts by the United States with the GCC will force the United States to respond to an attack on a friendly region of such vital economic and strategic significance. Also, the very threat of United States intervention, along with a stronger defense force in the GCC, may well be enough of a deterrent to aggression. This deterrence is the most important objective of the proposed strategy.

CONCLUSION

Can Strategy Work

The strategy proposed above asks much of the GCC. However, the main question remains as to whether the GCC states are willing to take the necessary steps for greater unity. Unfortunately, the doubts exceed the hopes. The GCC has not yet been able to implement the economic agreement its members signed at the GCC's inception in 1981. With an economic agreement not taken seriously enough, doubts surface as to the prospects for implementation of a more complex security system. The seriousness of purpose the GCC so admirably exhibited after Desert Storm ebbed with the passing of the immediate Iraqi threat. Already, the Damascus Declaration has achieved the status of a footnote in history. Furthermore, Omani Sultan Qaboos' proposal for a large GCC army received little real support from the rest of the GCC. Hopes for enactment of the proposed policy diminished as the individual GCC states took independent routes towards bilateral security arrangements with the United States. For its part, the United States has also encouraged the individual GCC states to take joint action, but American officials have acknowledged that the individual agreements constitute a sufficient program for security.

Foreign Policy Agenda

To have a reasonable hope of success the GCC must achieve the following:

Establish the United States as a dependable source of political and military assistance by making the GCC countries dependable allies among the Arab and Islamic nations. The GCC can facilitate this by pursuing foreign and regional policies that accommodate the interests of the United States as well as those of the rest of the region.

Upgrade the alliance with the United States so that domestic American conditions do not override an American response to aggression against the GCC.

GCC must create a regional political alliance that acts in unison on regional affairs and establishes that an attack on any one of the GCC countries is an attack on all.

GCC must pursue a cautious reapproachment with Iran as well as hold Iraq to all United Nations Security Resolutions, but also be willing to resume relations after a post-Ba'th regime fulfills its international legal obligations.

No country can guarantee its security if it must rely on outside military assistance no matter how vital this state is to its allies. Domestic considerations might preclude allies from defending the aggressed-upon states. However, in the absence of an actual defense treaty, GCC can help ensure that it maintains the favor and attention of the important states around it and in the world. Should the GCC fail to take the proposed steps, as appears likely, Kuwait may encourage as many individual proposals to be enacted as possible.

However the GCC would remain as an ineffective force for Kuwait's short-term and long-term defense needs. The greatest potential weakness of the recommended policy, therefore may be perception of its reliance upon American military actions.

A country so averse to taking casualties as the United States currently is, some could argue, cannot be an adequate defender no matter what its verbal declarations may be. The suggested policy, however, comes closest to satisfying this objective. By providing for an ambitious schedule of GCC American joint training exercises and rapid deployment drills, the GCC would several times a year have American military personnel rotating in different operations in the country. The result would be a GCC American military coalition that no potential aggressor can easily ignore. While a perfect forecast of an American response to an invasion of any GCC country may be impossible, the proposed strategy of defensive cooperation between the United States and GCC would certainly help prevent a would-be aggressor from provoking the United States in the first place.

No national security policy is foolproof. GCC countries will never be absolutely secure against aggression. It must assume that a potential aggressor may not be deterred by political or by military measures. But GCC can take measurable steps toward providing more security for its citizens. As a consequence, GCC must not adopt a rigid policy, but it must continue to be careful in its assessment of its allies' capabilities and the world order around it.

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